

# Why \$100 Bills More Popular Now

**A**N OMINOUS sign of the times is a report that workers are asking for \$50 and \$100 bills at the pay windows, rather than \$10 and \$20s.

While some cashiers may cast suspicious glances at customers with such big bills, this trend may be reaching the status of commonplace in Oklahoma. Many businesses have long been accustomed to it.

Oldtimers can remember peeling off a \$5 bill for a trip to the grocery. A lot of folks can recall the days when a \$20 bill would do the job. Now a \$50 or \$100 bill fits the weekly shopping list better.

Reports also indicate the public is relying upon currency and credit cards more than in the past.

A magazine item notes that in 1960 checking accounts held \$3.48 for every dollar in circulation. Last year checking balances amounted to only \$2.14 for every dollar moving around.

This might be interpreted in a number of ways, since a lot of us have had difficulty in maintaining either reasonable checking balances or pocket change. Most obvious,

of course, is the fact that the government has been printing a lot more money for a long time.

Because of swindlers, merchants are compelled to screen checkwriting customers carefully, but currency is eagerly accepted.

One might speculate on a possible relationship of preferences for big bills and our crime rate, which is going up also. The underground economy has always paid off in cash, making it more difficult to trace transactions for law violations or tax collections.

The U.S. Secret Service says that counterfeiters are keeping up with inflation by printing more spurious \$50 bills, rather than so many of the long-favored phony \$20 bills.

The change in currency choices may affect wear-and-tear on our money supply. Federal Reserve Bank officials have said that dollar bills last only 22 months before they wear out. Fives and tens last several months longer and \$20s have had a 5-year life expectancy.

On the basis of past circulation,

\$50 bills have lasted an average of nine years and \$100 bills as long as 25 years. These life spans, like our own, may be shortened if circulated too fast.

Economists say that we are having a recession in the midst of inflation, which sounds like they are saying the economy is going up and coming down at the same time. People are confused about whether to spend money or save it.

Regardless of what money is used, the public is aware that dollars won't buy what they used to. Purchasing power of a 1945 dollar had dropped to 60 cents by 1961, to 50 cents by 1969 and to only 24 cents by the latter part of 1979. It hasn't improved so far in 1980.

A recent news story quoted psychiatrists as saying that inflation could affect our mental health. They blamed inflation for marital strife, alcoholism and aggressive behavior.

People just can't understand how they can make so much money and still have so many problems making it buy what they want.